



Neighborhood Treats K-3rd Grade Post- Visit Lesson Plan

Overview:

Immigrants who were detained overnight were introduced to a variety of foods that they tried for the very first time at Ellis Island. Men, women, and children alike spoke in great detail about tasting Jello, white bread, and bananas, and oftentimes sent letters back home describing their awe, nervous anticipation, and the tastes and textures of these foods.

For this activity, students will learn about the different foods that contribute to the immigrant tradition today. As immigrants tasted foods at Ellis Island for the first time, students will be given an opportunity to try new culinary tastes in the classroom. They will identify how different cultures impact our diets, and discuss how immigrants continue to influence and enhance our cultural palates.

Important Note:

Please check students for food allergies and dietary restrictions before starting this activity.

Time Frame: 25-30 minutes

Materials:

- Variety of foods traditional to immigrant communities that can increasingly be found at the local supermarket or local immigrant neighborhoods. Ideas include lychee, plantains, soft-shell tacos, matzoth, gelato, and kielbasa, amongst others.
- Audio clip excerpt from the Ellis Island Oral History Collection (www.nps.gov/elis/forteachers, click on “Curriculum Materials” and then on “Primary Sources for your Classroom” and then on “Kathleen Remembers Trying Pizza” to listen and download the audio file and read and download the transcript.)
- Paper
- Pencils/Pen

Objectives:

At the end of the lesson, students will:

- Describe the new feelings of trying new foods for the first time.
- Identify the different foods immigrants have introduced to the United States.
- Evaluate the importance of (imported) foods to an immigrant culture.

Procedure:

1. Anticipatory Set-

“Does anyone remember trying foods like yogurt or cottage cheese for the first time? (Other examples apply, of course). Can you recall how the food tastes, and the textures of the food? Do you remember how the food smelled and tasted as you started chewing? If you understand how it felt to try new foods, then you know a little bit about today’s topic of immigrants who brought foods and tried foods in their new countries.”

2. Explain that immigrants arrived to Ellis Island tired and scared, but officials tried to improve their stay by providing a suitable place to stay and offering three meals-a-day. For those who had to stay overnight, immigrants remembered trying foods for the very first time. Inform students that they will be hearing an actual interview from immigrants as they share their experience of trying new food in America. Gather students in a concentric circle (or the preferred class discussion format) and the sample recording.
3. Play a recording from Ellis Island immigrant, Kathleen Magennis Lamberti. Using a blank sheet of paper (or their journals), students will write their feelings, describing how immigrants felt as they tried these new foods. Students will participate in a share-out after the recordings have been played.
4. Explain that immigrants who arrive today continue to try new foods in the United States, and they also continue to bring new foods to this country. These culinary tastes have greatly shaped our daily diets. In this class, students will get the opportunity to try some of the foods immigrants have brought to the United States that can be found in marketplaces today. Distribute several food selections and have students taste them.
Some ideas include:
 - Lychee (lee-chee) - (native to China)
 - Plantains (plan-tin) - (popular in the Caribbean and Central American country)
 - Soft-shell tacos - (Mexico and other Central America)
 - Matzoth (mah-tsah) - (well-liked in many Ashkenazi Jewish communities)
 - Gelato (juh-lah-toh) - (traditions date to ancient Rome and Egypt)
 - Kielbasa (kil-bah-suh) - (a staple dish in many Eastern European countries)
5. Homework: Instruct students to write a brief paragraph (four or five sentences) describing their experience with tasting these foods for the first time. Students should also consider how these foods help expand our diets. Further, students can imagine how immigrants would feel about trying these new, exotic foods today.